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C O N F I D E N T I A L KAMPALA 001847

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [UG](#)  
SUBJECT: UGANDA: RULING PARTY GEARS UP FOR FIGHT OVER  
PARLIAMENTARY SEAT

Classified By: PolOff Jarahn Hillsman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) Summary: Residents in the eastern county of Bugweri, Iganga District are preparing for a second parliamentary election following a High Court ruling that nullified the February 2006 results. The court, responding to a Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) petition, noted a number of irregularities in the electoral process and called for new elections to be held on December 13. The ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party candidate Kirunda Kivejinja, who is the Minister of Information and Guidance, won in 2006. He is expected to carry the district again as the NRM is taking no chances and is aggressively supporting his campaign. The High Court recalled four other parliamentary results this year on the basis of electoral irregularities. End Summary.

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Background: Court Nullifies Bugweri Election Results  
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12. (U) FDC candidate Abdu Katuntu alleged in a March 30 petition to the High Court that squads of armed men wearing yellow T-shirts, the official color of the NRM, intimidated voters in Bugweri, Iganga District into supporting NRM candidate Kirunda Kivejinja. The High Court sided with Katuntu in an October 2006 ruling, nullifying the February 2006 parliamentary results. The High Court cited incidents of voter intimidation and other irregularities. On November 13 and 14, the Electoral Commission approved four candidates to run in the by-election, which was set for December 13. The frontrunners, however, are Kivejinja and Katuntu.

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Electoral Preparations Underway; Farmers Pessimistic  
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13. (U) Emboffs traveled to Bugweri on November 19 to discuss electoral preparations with government officials and residents. Electoral Commission (EC) Assistant District Returning Officer Idah Tusiime told Emboffs that electoral preparations began immediately following the October 26 ruling, and that the EC had conducted voter education through various media outlets. Tusiime said that the EC established several mechanisms for ensuring free and fair elections this time, including a complaint review and electoral monitoring committee, increased security cooperation, and training for polling officials.

14. (U) Emboffs met with peasant farmers in Bugweri on November 19. Residents confirmed reports of intimidation and irregularities during the February 2006 election, and welcomed the opportunity to vote again. They shared frustration over what they believe was a lack of interest in addressing issues of potable water, healthcare, and education in their region. "The politicians are only interested in

maintaining their positions when they get to Kampala," one commented.

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Comment  
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15. (C) Electoral preparations appear to be moving forward without incident, but based on previous by-elections, the ruling NRM can be expected to turn up the heat as election day nears. The NRM has placed great importance on helping 70-year-old Kivejinja, who is also the Third Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Information and Guidance, maintain his parliamentary seat in the opposition-friendly district. Security Minister Amama Mbabazi and NRM General Secretary and Presidential Advisor for Political Affairs

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Major Mutale Kakooza attended Kivejinja's November 16 campaign launch. Kakooza's presence, given his connection to the para-military organization (Kalangala Action Plan) which was accused of harassing opposition parties during other elections, has caused concern among the other candidates. Museveni is rumored to be joining the campaign trail as he did in other by-elections. Emboffs will return to Bugweri to monitor the December 13 elections. End Comment.  
CHRITTON